

EAGLE

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A Small Victory

Another small victory has been won by the anti-smokers in their earnest but quiet war against the tobacco interests.

For years now, many doctors, medical organizations and laymen have stated a belief that there is a link between excessive cigarette smoking and respiratory and other diseases.

Last year the Air Surgeon General ordered the free distribution of cigarettes to patients in Air Force hospitals stopped.

An effort has been made to curb advertising of cigarettes that is aimed at youthful smokers.

Some school and church organizations have launched educational campaigns designed to inform teenagers, who are not yet smoking addicts, of the possible dangers of heavy smoking in later life.

A state-wide youth meeting was held at Durham to air the opinions of individuals and groups who believe smoking is a health hazard.

And now most of the major cigarette manufacturers have decided to discontinue advertising in college newspapers, magazines and football programs, it was learned this week.

A top official of the Tobacco Institute says the manufacturers have always regarded smoking as an adult custom. Now, to avoid confusion, a number of member companies have decided to drop college advertising and other promotional activity.

One manufacturer said the move was

intended to prevent "youngsters" from getting the idea smoking is "grown-up and the thing to do." In discussions of why young people smoke, imitation of adults is frequently given as a chief motivation.

The same manufacturer says his firm will not advertise cigarettes on television programs before 9 p.m.

Madison Avenue sources report some companies are considering self-regulation including elimination of athletes from cigarette ads.

It should be obvious by now to most thinking people that heavy cigarette smoking cannot be shrugged off as an unpleasant but harmless habit. Too much maneuvering is going on in high places.

Also, it has been obvious right along that the best time to stop smoking is before you start.

It may be true the country would be economically crippled if the tobacco industry went out of business overnight.

But if the process began with a generation of non-smokers now in elementary school and was applied gradually to the entire nation on a voluntary basis, adjustments could be made to absorb those dependent on the industry.

Doctors and others who have been working on this health problem should tackle it with renewed energy after this latest little victory.

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